Healthy Happy Places

Urban design as a place-based approach to community health and wellbeing

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Co-Creator

AHSN NENC

Healthy Happy Places

Supporting and creating mental health and wellbeing through the design of places and spaces

- …..using a multi-sector approach between health, public health, architecture/design, the arts, planning/regeneration, and citizens
- …..focussing on areas of inequalities

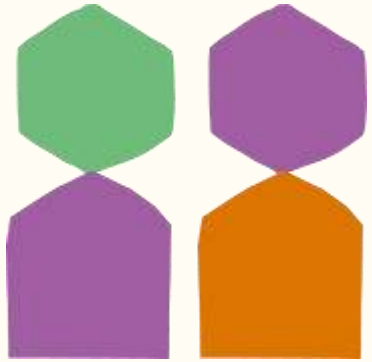
With thanks to funding from:

Academic Health Science Network North East and North Cumbria

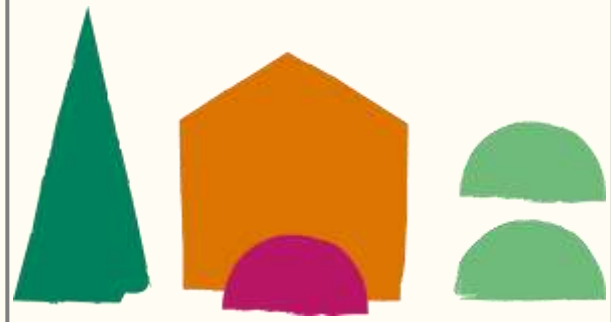
ICS Integrated Care System North East & North Cumbria

Healthy Happy Places

Place specific



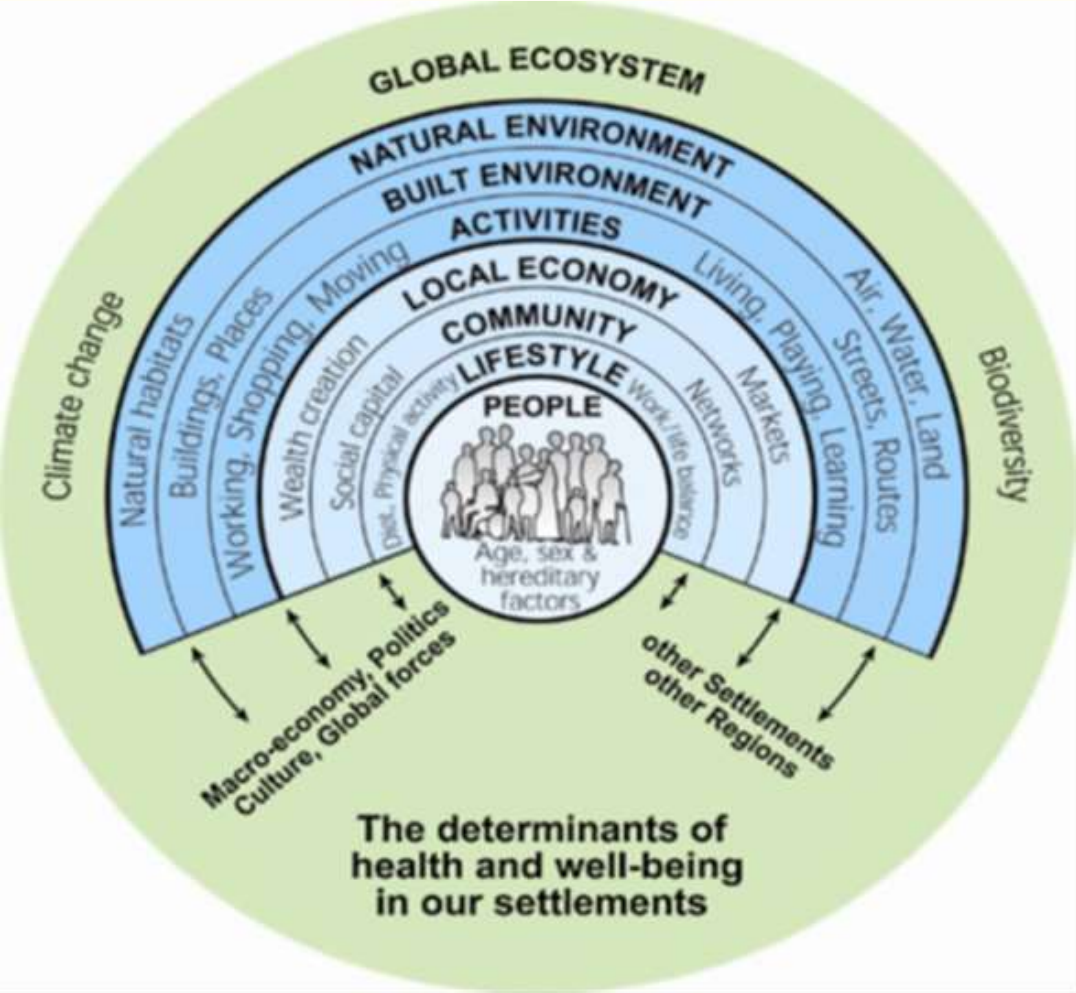
People



Buildings & spaces in between

Evidence → Implementation

Healthy Happy Places

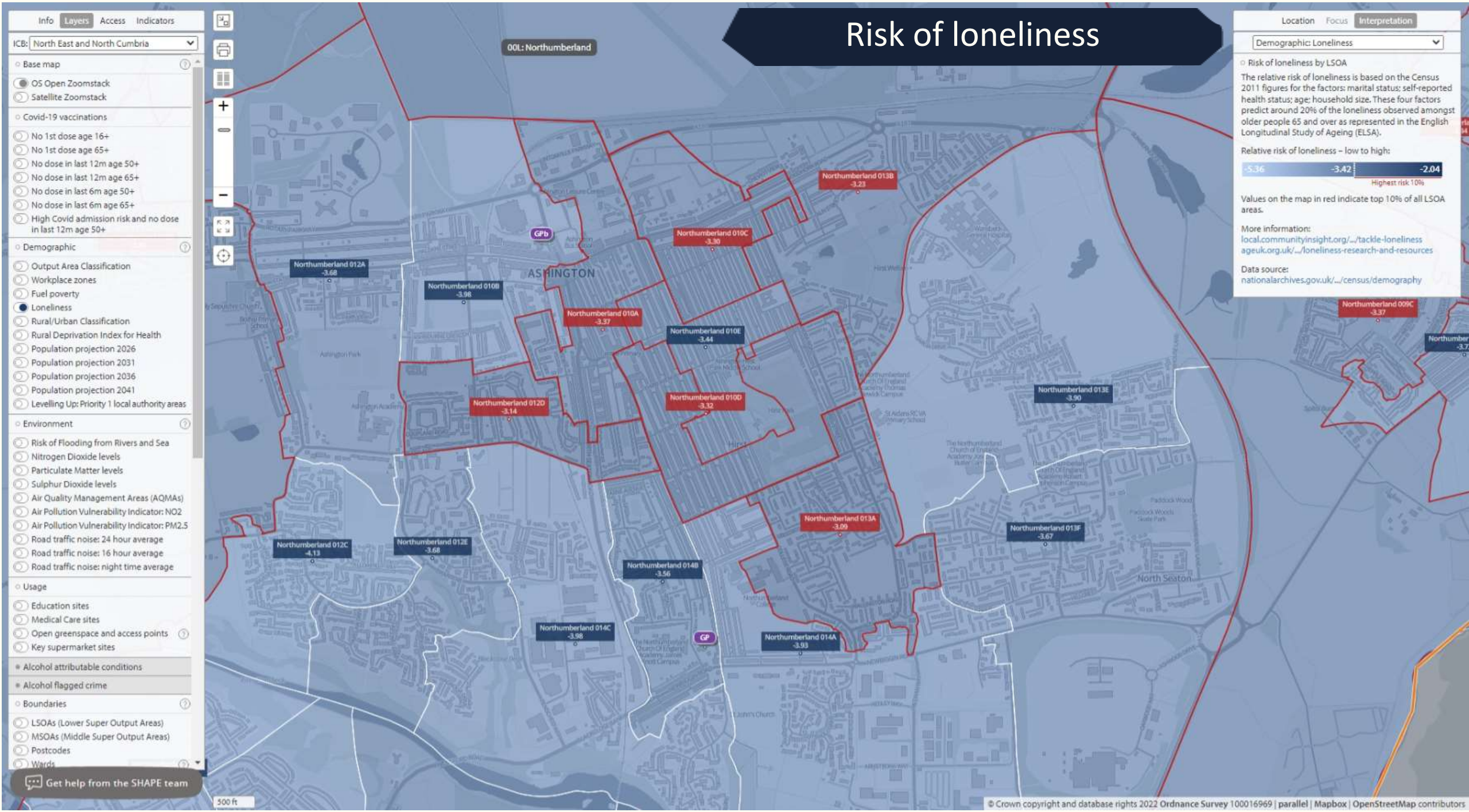


Settlement health map (Barton, 2009)

"People's **opportunities for health are influenced by factors outside of the health and social care system.** They lie in the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age: the social determinants of health. These are **the 'causes of the causes' of ill health and they can enable individuals and societies to flourish, or not**. Creating a healthier population requires greater action on these issues. This includes **addressing the role of both the physical built environment and the social factors which shape neighbourhoods and places**" (pg. 4; NHS England, 2019a).

UK reported to be "worse than any other EU country for social isolation and neighbourhood belonging" (pg. 6) with the cost of this estimated to be £32billion per year (Eden Project Communities).

Risk of loneliness



Social Safeness - the extent to which people experience their world as safe, warm, and soothing.

People with “**high loneliness** reported significantly higher fears of expressing compassion for others and self, and receiving compassion from others, as well as **lower reported social safeness, subjective happiness and social connection** compared to those with reported low loneliness” (Best et al, 2021).

“A positive feeling state that can help to regulate other emotions but can be there independently. It is experienced as a feeling of warmth and connectedness. It differs from attachment security in that it extends to the **wider social environment**, where others are perceived and experienced as soothing. It is likely related to individual capacity and **related to the environment itself** (Gilbert, 2009)” Quoted by Angela Kennedy.

Placemaking

"an approach and a set of tools that puts the community front and centre of determining what their place looks like and how it functions" (Cara Courage, Healthy Happy Places webinar presentation, 2023)

If healing and recovery requires a multi-dimensional approach, with foci on the environment as well as the individual, then placemaking becomes an important part of the 'system' for thinking about how wellbeing and mental health can be created and supported within communities, and for us all.

'The community is the expert in their own lives.'
Jeanne van Heeswijk

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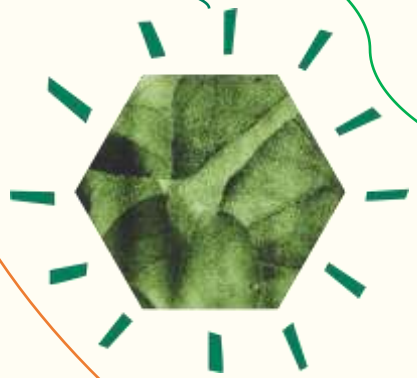
Trauma informed

Neurodiverse aware

Dementia friendly

Arts / Creative



Biophilic /
Nature inspired

Community owned /
activated

Lifestyle Security

Healthy Happy Places

Data
+
lived experience through creative practice

Co-produced

‘Ground-up’

Capturing impact

Healthy Happy Places

Understanding Place

Creative commission: ‘Places of Sanctuary’

How can our towns create and nurture positive mental health and wellbeing for all?

- Can sanctuary be found in a physical place or is it an imagined space, or a mix of both?
- What would an imagined safe space look and feel like?
- How can this be applied to real spaces in the town centre?
- How can we make shared public spaces feel more welcoming, safe, joyful?

Commissions - AHSN NENC (ahsn-nenc.org.uk)

Healthy Happy Places

Wallsend

North Tyneside Council

Mustard Stories CIC

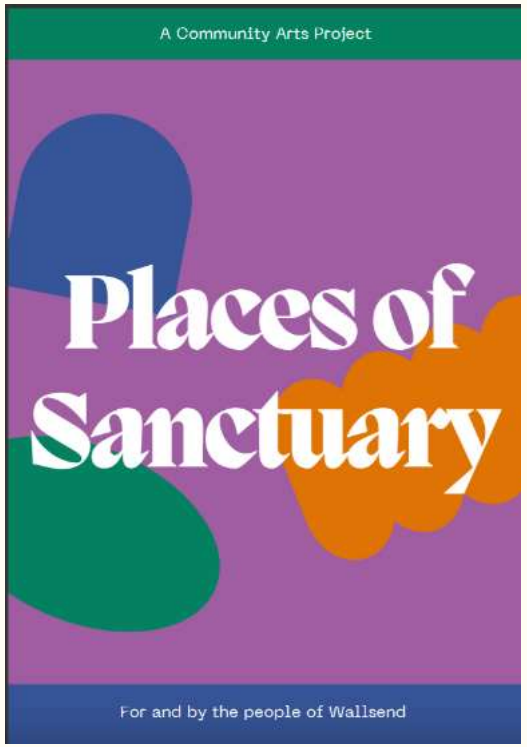
Anxious Minds

Academic Health Science Network North East and North Cumbria

ICS

Places of Sanctuary animation (Wallsend)

Further info: Wallsend, North Tyneside – Places of Sanctuary - AHSN NENC (ahsn-nenc.org.uk)



Places of Sanctuary zine ('zeen')

A place to grow

A PLACE TO HAVE A FUTURE

"YOU CAN'T DO LEVELLING UP TOP DOWN YOU HAVE TO DO IT BOTTOM UP"

WHEN PEOPLE THINK ABOUT IMPROVEMENT THEY ONLY LOOK AT THE NEGATIVE THINGS AND NOT THE POSITIVE.

-ALISON

Wallsend

Live Work Play

RICKY DEES PARK

Ricky Dees Park would be in my masterplan.

It's a place where people can meet in the open air and celebrate Wallsend. I'd have school celebrations of Wallsend's history from the vikings to the Romans through to the Georgians, the Victorians and the shipyards and the coal mines and the rock stars and Oscar nominated actresses who say they're from Wallsend.

There would be open air community theatre pieces and singing and processions.

And stargazing.

- Mary Pickin

"Creative, kind-hearted and structured. It was fun and prompted me to use my own creativity (art and writing) more effectively."

"My experience on the project was amazing. Meeting people and sharing experiences they share of Wallsend."

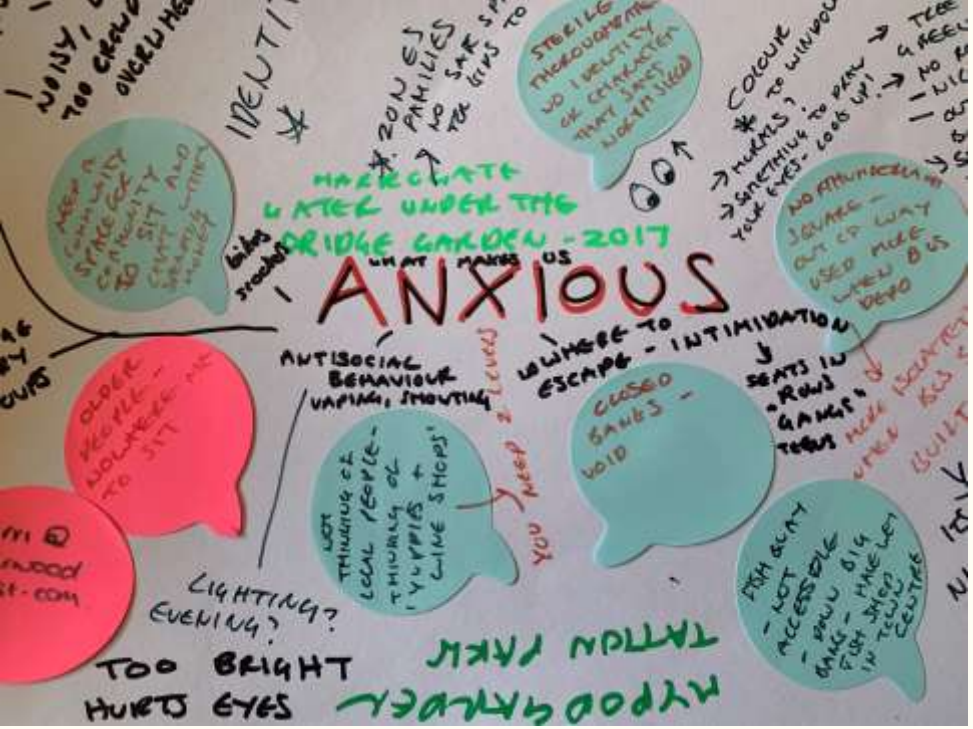
"Brilliant. Really enjoyed the experience and you learn new things."

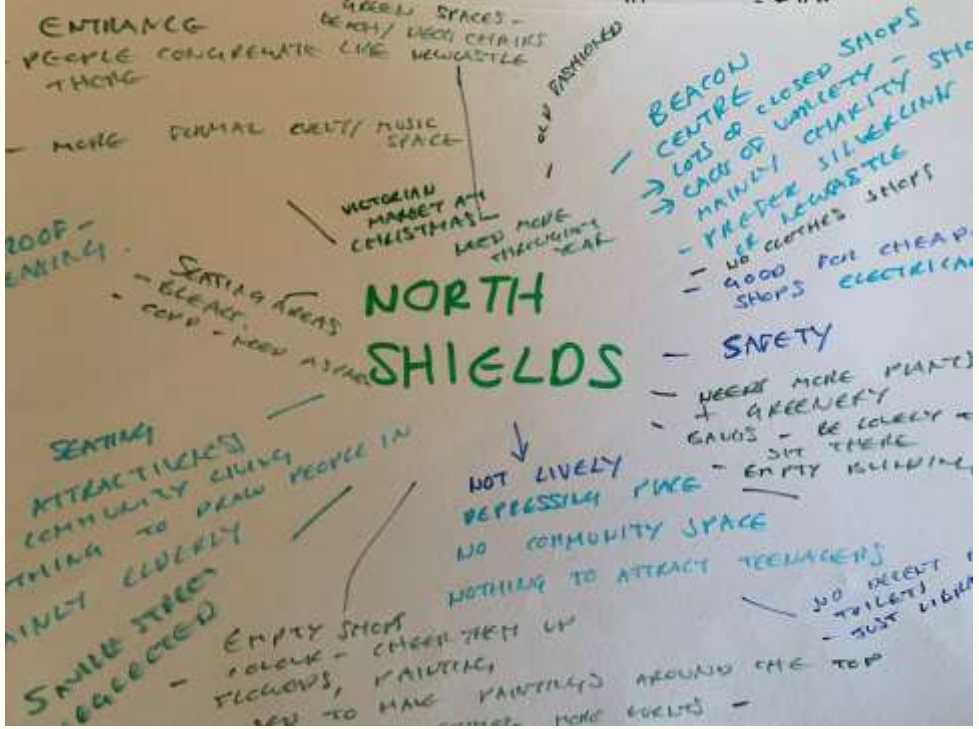
"I went from being unsure about whether to participate to feeling I and others present had a valuable contribution and our voices were heard."

"The confidence Mustard Stories has given me is fantastic, I'm using my art and creative writing now to greater effect. I would heartily recommend people to attend your workshops."

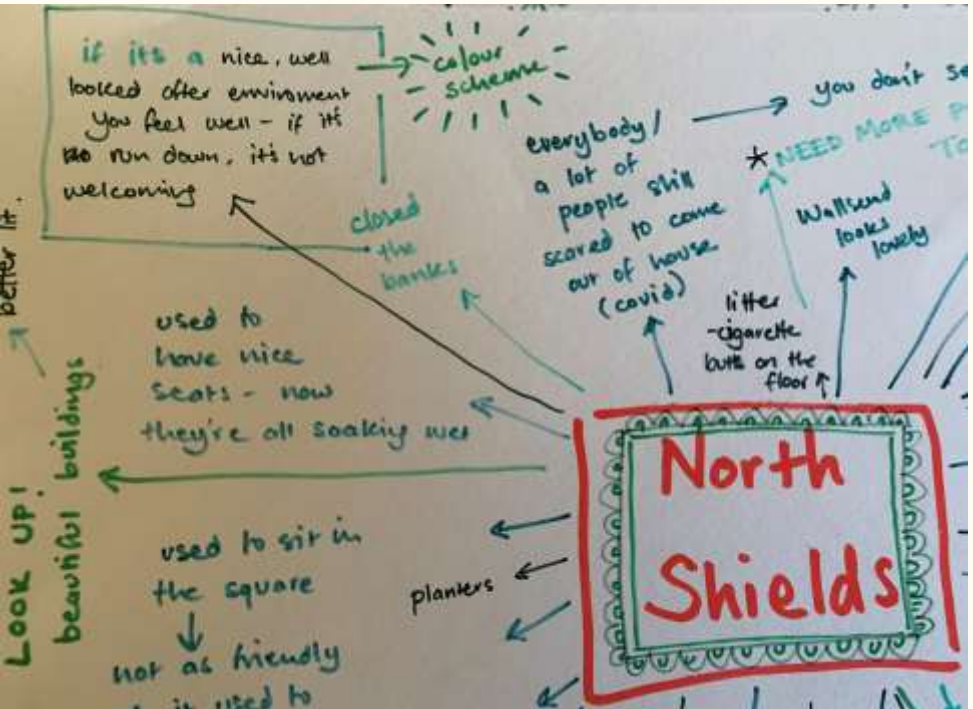
"I used to love going to live productions and visiting places where people's creations were displayed. The community needs some enjoyable, more social places where people with common interests can get together and share with each other."

"Reopen the Buddle Arts Centre. Wallsend forum and high street is maybe not the most attractive place and looks ran down. But apparently there is a master plan to make it better! But this is a strange place and the people are strong. Consult the people."





North Shields



CEDARWOOD TRUST
Nurture - Nourish - Thrive

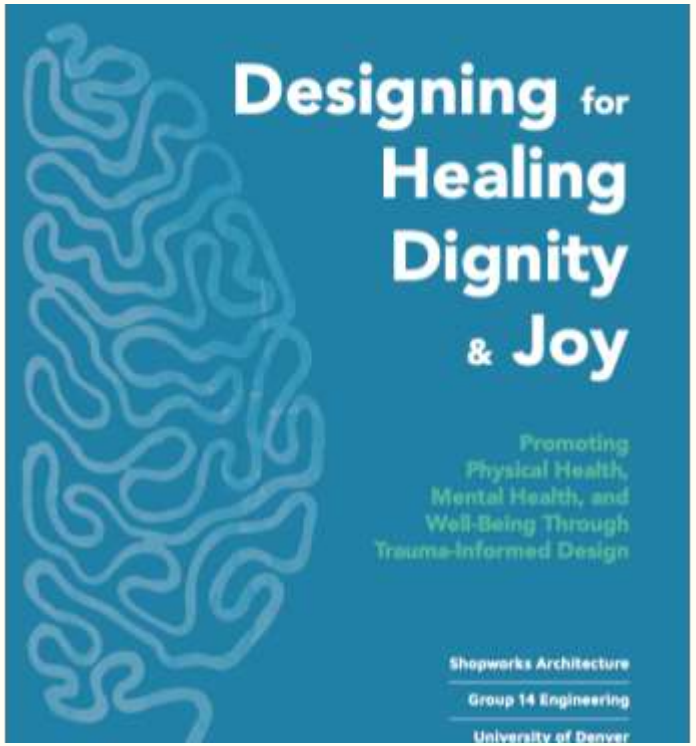
CHANGING LIVES

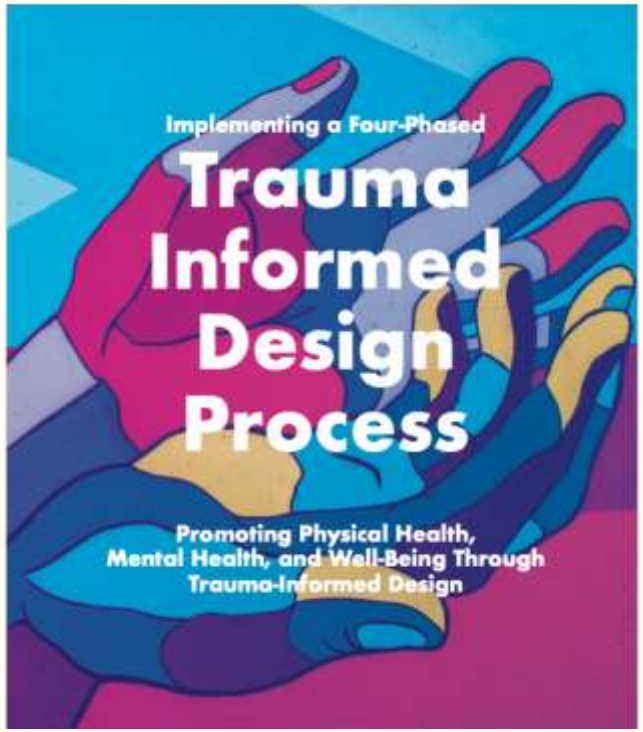
North Shields

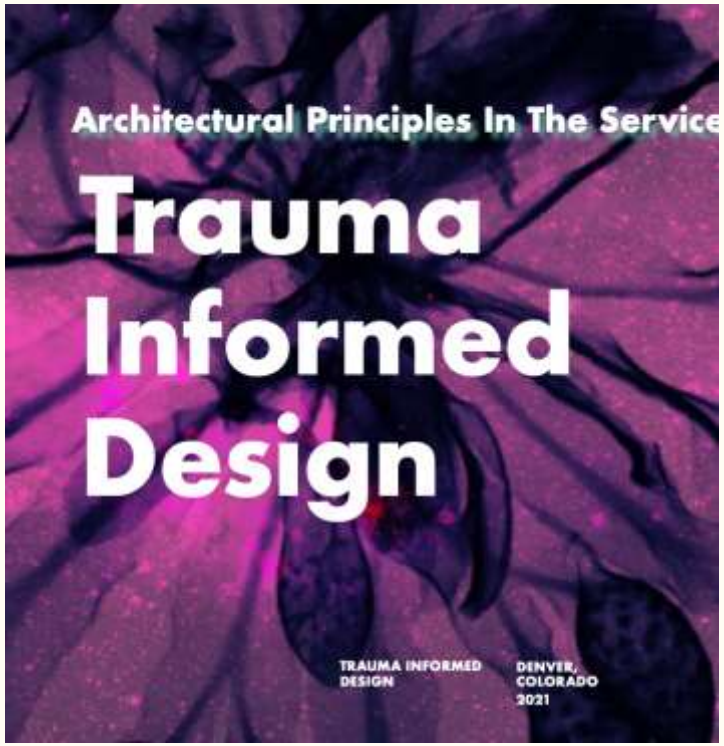
The Beacon

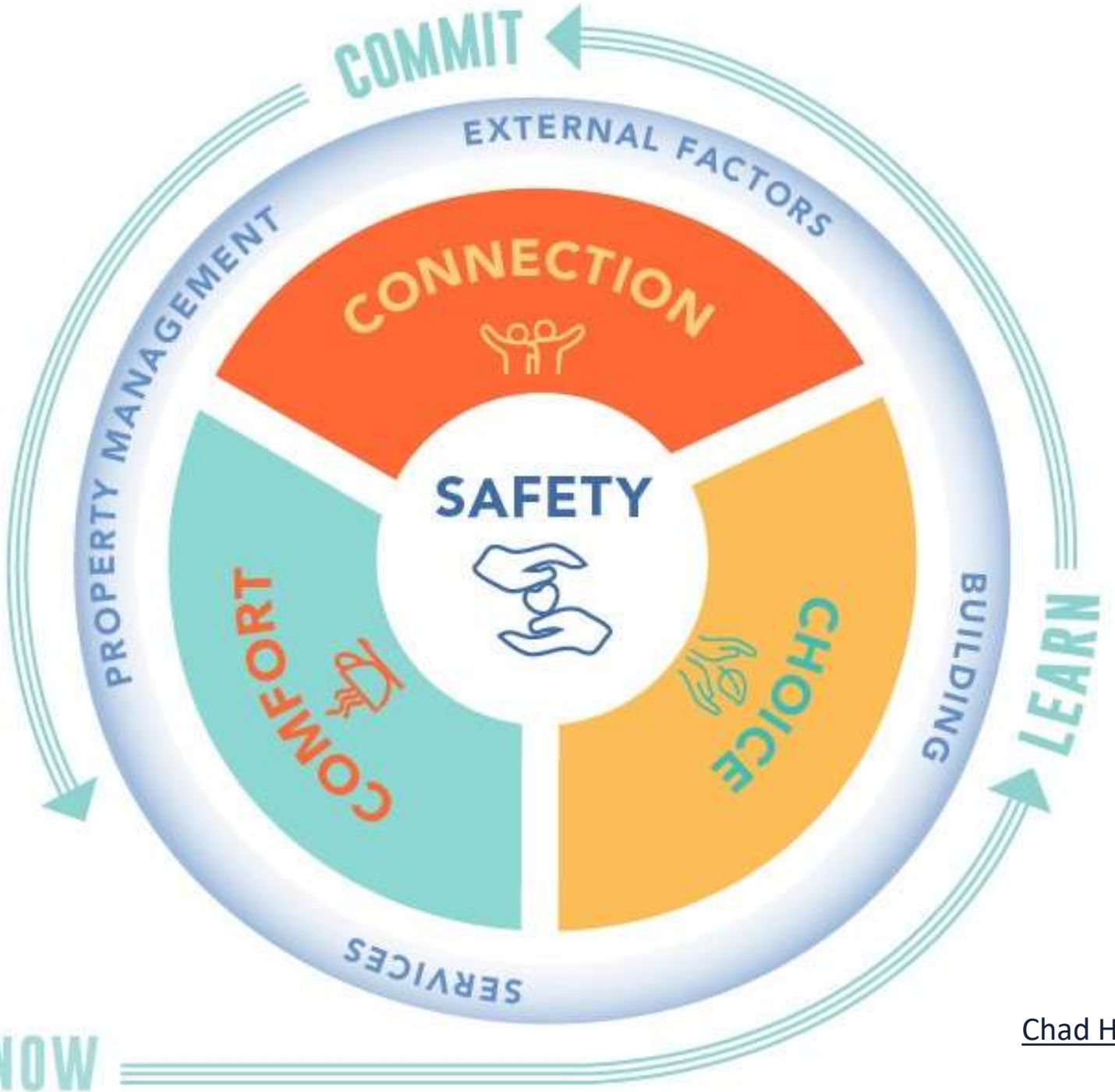
North Shields

www.Shopworksarc.com/tid









Slide credit & Reference:
Chad Holzinger & Dr. Jennifer Wilson
www.Shopworksarc.com/tid

Laurel House | Grand Junction, Colorado, USA

"The Laurel House Apartments offers 34 one-bedroom apartments that will provide permanent, safe housing to youth in the Grand Valley who are most at risk of long-term homelessness. The program provides young people with access to mental health services and assists in finding jobs at local businesses. They also provide help with school enrolment, substance abuse mitigation, and life-skills training."

Slide credit & Reference:
Chad Holzinger & Dr. Jennifer Wilson
www.Shopworksarc.com/tid

“A physical environment that is dangerous, that feels unstable or unpredictable, will have our nervous system in a state of **hyperarousal**,” Vázquez notes, “while a **physical environment that communicates consistency, predictability and care** will calm our nervous system.”

“Being in a supportive community, having connections with other people and **the natural world**, and taking opportunities to move and be safely grounded in the body all play important roles. Trauma is all-encompassing, and so trauma healing is all-encompassing”

'Trauma-Informed Placemaking' Gives Cities Space to Heal - Bloomberg

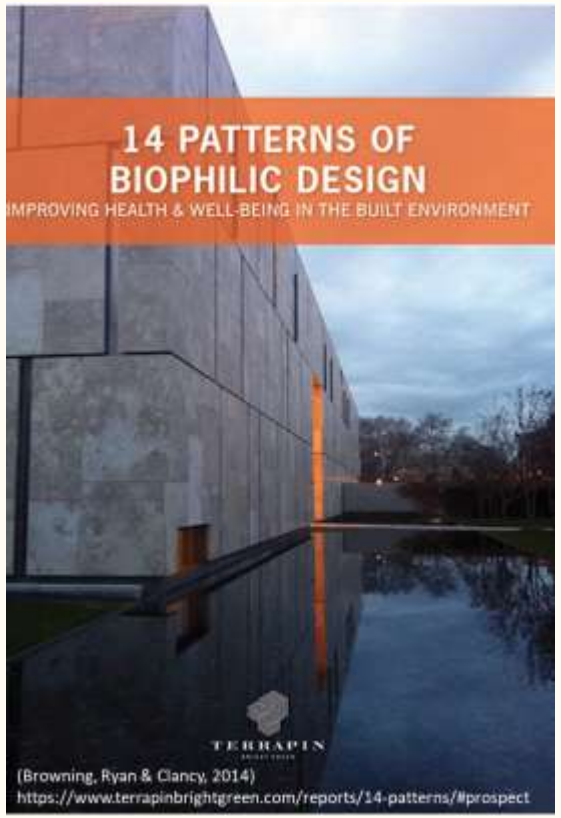
Nature and Recovery…..

Ulricht stress recovery theory

- US study during the 1980s found that patients who were recovering from gall bladder surgery had quicker, and more positive recovery experiences when their bed faced a view of trees and nature compared to those who faced a brick wall. (8.5% shorter hospital stay, patients took fewer analgesics)

Attention restoration theory

- Nature has a restorative effect and acts as a form of retreat in response to high mental demand scenarios requiring sustained periods of attention
- Natural environment restores ability to direct and control attention



"The concept of biophilia implies that humans hold a biological need for connection with nature on physical, mental, and social levels and this connection affects our personal well-being, productivity, and societal relationships" – *Sheeps Meadow, 2004* ***(in 14 Patterns of Biophilic Design)***

"Biophilia is the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" – *E.O. Wilson, 1984* ***(in 14 Patterns of Biophilic Design)***

https://www.terramai.com/blog/biophilic-design-real-life-examples/

‘Nature in Space’ – Direct experiences of nature

https://www.terramai.com/blog/biophilic-design-real-life-examples/

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/253046072794066932/

‘Natural Analogues’ –
Indirect or representational experiences of nature

http://blendconcepts.com/2016/06/biophilic-design-features-for-environments/

‘Nature of the Space’ – Prospect, refuge, mystery, risk/peril, awe

“Refuge conditions have been shown to improve concentration, attention and perception of safety while also reducing irritation and fatigue.”
(Terrapin Bright Green)

‘Buildings Speak to Us’

Dr Khadj Rouf, Dr Angela Sweeney, Dr Angela Kennedy, Lisa Ward

How can we make people feel welcome?

What helps people feel safe?

How does the space increase soothing across the senses?

How do we ensure privacy and dignity?

What messages do we give about recovery?

Trauma-Informed Placemaking

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A research-as-publication project to understand the role of trauma and healing in place-based practice, research and theory

Trauma-Informed Placemaking (traumainformed.place)

The Nightingale Project (@nightingale_project) | Instagram
by Dr Nick Rhodes

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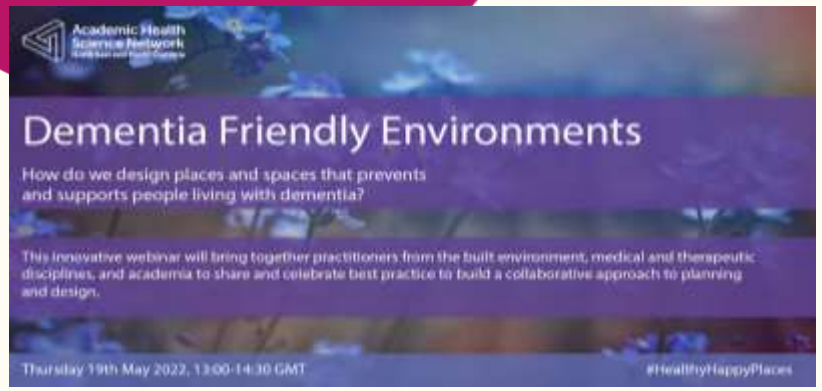
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